

Testimony of Alan J. Desmarais, member of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority Board of Directors, to the Joint Committee on Environment

Proposed S.B. No. 3 (2009) – AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ACQUISITION OR USE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND AS ASH RESIDUE DISPOSAL AREAS

February 13, 2009

To the Joint Committee on Environment

Thank you for the opportunity today to speak in opposition of Proposed S.B. No. 3. The proposed bill would remove from consideration certain parcels of land located in the towns of Franklin and Windham for use by the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) as an ash landfill.

In order to place my comments in some context, I believe it is important to note that I was appointed to the new CRRA Board as a member with experience in public finance. I also serve as a municipal finance director for a town of 55,000 in central Connecticut. I believe it is also important to note that the new CRRA Board consists predominantly of active elected officials – in other words, the new CRRA Board is mainly municipal leaders acting on behalf of municipalities.

Removing these two sites from consideration would have the following effects:

- 1) It would place a new burden on local budgets of \$8 per ton for every ton of municipal solid waste (garbage) delivered for disposal. For my own town, that will mean an additional \$128,000 per year in costs.
- 2) This would, in effect, create a new state mandate and cost for Connecticut towns.
- 3) It would effectively remove self-determination from local governments. Local decision making processes exist and function in the towns. The location of an ash landfill is currently under consideration by these communities.
- 4) The landfilling of the ash from trash-to-energy plants would still be required even if this bill becomes law. The ash would then be transported to more distant landfills, creating additional air pollution and a larger carbon footprint.
- 5) The bill would deprive the host community or communities payments from CRRA of approximately \$1.5 million annually.
- 6) Rejection of this site may force consideration of a different site that may be less environmentally friendly and less suitable for an ash landfill. Exhaustive studies on the appropriateness of this site are being performed, and will definitively measure whether this is the best site for an ash landfill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for your consideration.